

Sub E1  
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~~said first conditions are effective to produce a precursor polymer dispersion comprising particles of said water-soluble polymer at a level of prehydration; wherein, upon addition of a sufficient quantity of said precursor polymer dispersion to a final brine comprising an aqueous solution of a second salt at a final density, said precursor polymer dispersion produces a final polymer dispersion comprising a second concentration comprising final particles of said water-soluble polymer at a final level of hydration, said second concentration and said final level of hydration being effective at downhole conditions to maintain an effective level of a property of said final brine selected from the group consisting of rheology, fluid loss control, and a combination thereof.~~

D1

Sub E3

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~~26. (Twice amended) A precursor polymer dispersion comprising:  
an aqueous solution of a first salt at a first density, said first salt comprising cations consisting essentially of cations of one or more multivalent alkaline earth metals; and  
a first concentration of particles of a water-soluble polymer at a level of prehydration;  
wherein, upon addition of a sufficient quantity of said precursor polymer dispersion to a final brine comprising an aqueous solution of a second salt at a final density, said precursor polymer dispersion produces a final polymer dispersion comprising a second concentration comprising final particles of said water-soluble polymer at a final level of hydration, said second concentration and said final level of hydration being effective at downhole conditions to maintain an effective level of a property of said~~

D2

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final brine selected from the group consisting of rheology, fluid loss control, and a combination thereof.

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Sub E3

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42. (Twice Amended) A method for producing a brine for use in drilling and completion operations comprising:

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providing a precursor brine comprising an aqueous solution of a first salt at a first

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density, said first salt comprising cations consisting essentially of cations of

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one or more multivalent alkaline earth metals; and

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mixing a water-soluble polymer with said precursor brine at a first concentration and

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under first conditions, wherein said first density, said first concentration, and

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said first conditions are effective to produce a precursor polymer dispersion

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comprising particles of said water-soluble polymer at a level of prehydration;

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wherein, upon addition of a sufficient quantity of said precursor polymer dispersion

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to a final brine comprising an aqueous solution of a second salt at a final

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density, said precursor polymer dispersion produces a final polymer dispersion

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comprising a second concentration comprising final particles of said water-

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soluble polymer at a final level of hydration, said second concentration and

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said final level of hydration being effective at downhole conditions to maintain

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an effective level of a property of said final brine selected from the group

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consisting of rheology, fluid loss control, and a combination thereof; and

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mixing said sufficient quantity of said precursor polymer dispersion with said final

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brine.

Sub E47

57. (Twice amended) A precursor polymer dispersion comprising:  
a precursor brine comprising an aqueous solution of a first salt at first density; said  
first salt comprising cations consisting essentially of cations of one or more  
multivalent alkaline earth metals;  
a precursor polymer dispersion in said precursor brine comprising a first  
concentration of particles of a water-soluble polymer at a level of  
prehydration;  
wherein, upon mixing of a sufficient quantity of said precursor polymer dispersion  
with a final brine comprising an aqueous solution of a second salt at a final  
density, said precursor polymer dispersion produces a second concentration  
of final particles of said water-soluble polymer at a final level of hydration,  
said second concentration and said final level of hydration being effective at  
downhole conditions to maintain an effective level of a property of said final  
brine selected from the group consisting of rheology, fluid loss control, and  
a combination thereof.

#### REMARKS

##### Obviousness Rejections

The examiner maintains the rejection of claims 1, 2, 3, 7, 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 30-37, 38-41, 42-51, 52-64 and 65 as obvious over DD v. Mondshine v. House.